

The Public Ought To Know

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By Corey Bearak

Libraries matter

At a recent evening event touting my home borough, a colleague introduced me to the new head of the Queens Public Library (aka the largest-circulating system in the world).

Of course I promoted *The Public Ought To Know* as a worthy addition to its system which also includes access to e-books and all other multi-media forms.

But more so, I shared how I framed the argument for public (aka City and State) financial support of its libraries (New York City includes two other systems — Brooklyn and New York which cover Manhattan, Staten Island and The Bronx) in *The Public Ought To Know*:

"...libraries offer much more than books and periodicals. Each serves as a multimedia center and a place of community gathering and activity...Our libraries operate insufficient hours of operation; this results from persistent underfunding."

The timing of the discussion — with the Mayor then about to release his Proposed Executive Budget and the advent of summer when we need libraries even more (as explained in *The Public Ought To Know*) makes partaking of the insights, knowledge and wisdom one gains through reading this commentary all the more relevant.

In prior years the cuts proposed by Mayors to Library operations (think less days open and less hours the days branches open) impact the systems and more, importantly users (and potential users) even if/ when the Council makes restorations. Each library system braces for the proposed cuts by cutting services (this also tends to affect the library staff — union members — who work in the branches) for the new budget year starts— July 1. So when school is out and the heat is on, air conditioned libraries open less. So the cuts the Council restores usually restores services AFTER the summer. Makes no sense. This one dance ought to end.

***Corey Bearak can be reached at StrategicPublicPolicy.com. Find his ebook, *The Public Ought To Know*, at Kindle, Nook and Apple iBooks.**

